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ABSTRACT

Self awareness of academic skills by 9 primary age and 15 intermediate age mildly mentally handicapped (MiMH) students in a special class and 14 intermediate age learning disabled students in a resource room was measured. Ss completed a modification of H. Myklebust's Pupil Rating Scale. Results indicated primary MiMH Ss consistently rated themselves significantly more positively than they were rated by the teacher. Both intermediate MiMH and LD Ss rated themselves as more competent than teachers did, but there were more areas of correspondence between teachers' and students' ratings, particulary in the areas of spoken language, orientation, and behavior. It is suggested that MiMH and LD students might receive the most realistic feedback from teachers and parents in these skills areas. Complete versions of the teacher and student scales used in the study are appended. (CL)

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MILDLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS' SELF-AWARENESS OF ACADEMIC SKILLS

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Mildly Handicapped Students' Self-Awareness of Academic Skills

The need to explore mildly handicapped students' self-awareness stems from three different kinds of considerations. First, according to P.L. 94-142, the child should participate in the case conference "where appropriate." One might assume that "appropriateness" is based in large measure on the degree to which the student is aware of his own skills and, based on skill levels, can contribute to long-range goal-setting. Yet, according to Gillespie (1979), student participation in the I.E.P. process appears to be "virtually nonexistent." On the other hand, if self-awareness can be demonstrated, then that would be an argument for increased student participation in I.E.P. case conferences.

Second, there is, today, increasing emphasis on a "metacognitive" approach to academic remediation (Wong, 1982). This approach assumes the student's active participation in the remediation, and that assumes self-awareness of both the level of skill development and the way the student approaches the task. Yet, little of the metacognitive literature addresses evidence of the student's self-awareness level.

Third, there is an assumption in both the above considerations that self-awareness will lead to more effective instruction. That is, the more aware the student is, the more likely s/he will be motivated and willing to participate in instructional activities. While this assumption may be accurate, further research is necessary to bear this out.

Previous research demonstrating mildly handicapped students' self-awareness has been sparse. Levine, Clark, and Ferb (1981), using the Self-Administered Student Profile, have shown considerable agreement between student and teacher ratings on items of memory and attention, with less agreement on items of language, sequential, and visual and motor skills. Pierce and Klein (1982) found that children are only somewhat aware of behavioral deficiencies, although they did find some areas of agreement between students and parents. On the other hand, Nathan, Millham, Chilcutt, and Atkinson (1980) found that mildly retarded adults were accurate in judging their own adaptive behavior skills when these were assessed by the AAMD scale. Using data from non-handicapped elementary school children, both Davis (1978) and Boersma and Chapman (1978) have shown correspondence between students' own and teacher- and parent-ratings.

The present exploratory study investigated students' self-awareness of academically-related skills using modifications of Myklebust's Pupil Rating Scale. This kind of information was utilized because the Myklebust scale has continued to show its predictive and validity properties (Pihl and Nagy, 1980). Because of its ready availability, the modification of the scale presented by Gearheart (1973) was used for teacher ratings. Individual items were then re-worded to be in a form which could be understood by mildly handicapped students.

Subjects for this study included an intact class of nine primary-age mildly mentally handicapped pupils (MiMH), an intact class of fifteen intermediate-age MiMH pupils, and a group of fourteen intermediate-age learning disabled (LD) students receiving resource room services.

Students were individually tested during the times they were in the special education setting, and all items were read to them. Any questions were answered as directly and briefly as possible. Students were told to rate items "as you think your teacher would." Special education teachers independently completed the Pupil Behavior Rating Scales for each student.

Results

The primary MiMH group consistently rated themselves significantly more positively than they were rated by the teacher. While these data were not used in further analysis, a positive conclusion from the results is that they do have a positive, healthy self concept. However, they do not represent a realistic self-appraisal for this group.

For the intermediate MiMH and LD groups, there were areas of agreement between student- and teacher-ratings. Total score analyses show that both these groups did rate themselves as higher--more competent--than teachers did. However, for the intermediate MiMH group, there was correspondence between student- and teacher-ratings in the Spoken Language, Orientation, and Behavior categories. For the intermediate LD group there was correspondence in the Spoken Language category, and only slight difference between student- and teacher-ratings in the Behavior category.

It is also interesting to look at similarities and differences between thse two groups' own scores. Mean scores were not significantly different in the Auditory Comprehension and Listening, Behavior, and Motor categories. That is, in these areas, MiMH and LD students saw themselves as functioning on similar levels. However, in Spoken Language and Orientation skills, and on the total scores, LD students saw themselves as more capable.

Conclusions

In this small-scale study, primary-age mildly mentally handicapped students were unrealistic in rating their own academically-related skills. Intermediate-age MiMH students showed accuracy in the areas of Spoken Language, Orientation, and Behavior; and LD students in the Spoken Language area with some degree of accuracy in ragard to Behavior. These areas of correspondence may be highly related to teacher and parent feedback. That is, spoken language, proper "studenting" behavior, and, to some extent, the way the student thinks and orients himself/herself to the learning environment may be the things most realistically commented on by teachers or parents.

Limitations exist in this study due to the small sample size and also the lack of control over what, in fact, was being rated. The researchers were not able to exert firm control over who the student, or teacher, compared the student to as ratings were being made. Nevertheless, these results do encourage further study of student self-awareness of academic and academically-related skills, particularly for older mildly handicapped students.

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Table 1. Student Self-Awareness Ratings

Rating Area	Intermediate-age MiMH Mean	sd	Intermediate-age LD Mean	sd	Significance of Difference between Groups	Non-Significant from Teacher Rating
Auditory Comprehension and Listening (20)*	12.53	1.54	13.64	2.06	N.S.	
Spoken Language (25)*	14.27	3.23	17.64	2.88	.05	MiMH, LD
Orientation (20)*	12.60	9.44	15.71	2.55	.05	MiMH
Behavior (40)*	25.67	6.18	28.36	2.87	N.S.	MiMH, (LD close)
Motor (15)*	9.93	2.93	12.00	2.17	N.S.	
Total (120)*	74.73	13.72	87.79	8.33	.05	

*Possible number of points

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APPENDICES

Pupil Behavior Rating Scale (teacher version)

Self Evaluation of Learning Functions (student version)

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Special Education

Pupil Behavior Rating Scale

Adapted from (A project developed under Research Grant, USPHS Contract 108-65-42, Bureau of Neurological and Sensory Diseases.)

I. Auditory Comprehension and Listening

Ability to follow directions
1. Always confused; cannot or is unable to follow directions
2. Usually follows simple oral directions but often needs individual help
3. Follows direction that are familiar and/or not complex
4. Remembers and follows extended directions
5. Unusually skillful in remembering and following directions

Comprehension of class discussion
1. Always inattentive and/or unable to follow and understand directions
2. Listens but rarely comprehends well; mind often wanders from discussion
3. Listens and follows directions and discussions according to age and grade
4. Understands well and benefits from discussion
5. Becomes involved and shows unusual understanding of material discussed

Ability to retain orally given information
1. Almost total lack of recall; poor memory
2. Retains simple ideas and procedures if repeated often
3. Average retention of materials; adequate memory for age and grade
4. Remembers procedures and information from various sources; good immediate and delayed recall
5. Superior memory for both details and content

Comprehension of word meanings
1. Extremely immature level of understanding
2. Fails to grasp simple word meanings; misunderstands words at grade level
3. Good grasp of grade level vocabulary for age and grade
4. Understands all grade level vocabulary as well as higher level word meanings
5. Superior understanding of vocabulary; understands many abstract words

II. Spoken Language

Ability to speak in complete sentences using accurate sentence structure
1. Always uses incomplete sentences with grammatical errors
2. Frequently uses incomplete sentences and/or numerous grammatical errors
3. Uses correct grammar; few errors of omission or incorrect use of prepositions, verb tense pronouns
4. Above-average oral language; rarely makes grammatical errors
5. Always speak in grammatically correct sentences

Vocabulary ability
1. Always uses immature or improper vocabulary
2. Limited vocabulary including primarily simple nouns; few precise, descriptive words
3. Adequate vocabulary for age and grade
4. Above-average vocabulary; uses numerous precise descriptive words
5. High level vocabulary; always uses precise words to convey message; uses abstractions

Ability to recall words
1. Unable to call forth the exact words
2. Often gropes for words to express himself
3. Occasionally searches for correct word but adequate for age and grade
4. Above-average ability; rarely hesitates on a word
5. Always speaks well; never hesitates or substitutes words

Ability to formulate ideas from isolated facts
1. Unable to relate isolated facts
2. Has difficulty relating isolated facts; ideas are incomplete and scattered
3. Usually relates facts into meaningful ideas; adequate for age and grade
4. Relates facts and ideas well
5. Outstanding ability in relating facts appropriately

Ability to tell stories and relate experiences
1. Unable to tell a comprehensible story
2. Has difficulty relating ideas in logical sequence
3. Average ability to tell stories
4. Above average; uses logical sequence
5. Exceptional ability to relate ideas in a logical meaningful manner

III. Orientation

Promptness
1. Lack grasp of meaning of time; always late or confused
2. Poor time concept; tends to dawdle; often late
3. Average understanding of time for age and grade
4. Prompt; late only with good reason
5. Very skillful and handling schedules; plans and organizes well

Spatial orientation
1. Always confused; unable to navigate around classroom or school, playground or neighborhood
2. Frequently gets lost in relatively familiar surroundings
3. Can maneuver in familiar locations; average ability for age and grade
4. Above-average ability; rarely lost or confused
5. Never lost; adapts to new locations, situations, places

Judgement of relationships; big, little; far, close; light, heavy
1. Judgements of relationships very inadequate
2. Makes elementary judgements successfully
3. Average ability in relation to age and grade
4. Accurate judgements but does not generalize to new situations
5. Unusually precise judgements; generalizes them to new situations and experiences

Learning Directions
1. Highly confused; unable to distinguish directions as right, left, north, and south
2. Sometimes exhibits directional confusion
3. Average; uses right vs. left; north-south-east-west
4. Good sense of direction; seldom confused
5. Excellent sense of direction

IV. Behavior

Cooperation
1. Continually disrupts classroom; unable to inhibit responses
2. Frequently demands spotlight; often speaks out of turn
3. Waits his turn; average for age and grade
4. Cooperates well; above average
5. Cooperates without adult encouragement

Attention
1. Is never attentive; very distractible
2. Rarely listens; attention frequently wanders
3. Attends adequately for age and grade
4. Above average; almost always attends
5. Always attends to important aspects; long attention span

Ability to organize
1. Is highly disorganized; very slovenly
2. Often disorganized in manner of working; inexact, careless
3. Maintains average organization of work; careful
4. Above-average ability to organize and complet work; consistent
5. Always completes assignments in a highly organized and meticulous manner

Ability to cope with new situations; parties, trips, unanticipated changes in routine
1. Becomes extremely excitable; totally lacking in self control
2. Often overreacts; new situations disturbing
3. Adapts adequately for age and grade
4. Adapts easily and quickly with self-confidence
5. Excellent adaptation, utilizing unitiative and independence

Social acceptance
1. Avoided by others
2. Tolerated by others
3. Liked by others; average for age and grade
4. Well liked by others
5. Sought by others

Acceptance of responsibility
1. Rejects responsibility; never initiates activities
2. Avoids responsibility; limited acceptance of role for age
3. Accepts responsibility; adequate for age and grade
4. Enjoys responsibility; above average, frequently takes initiative or volunteers
5. Seeks responsibility; almost always takes initiative with enthusiasm

Completion of assignments
1. Never finishes; even with guidance
2. Seldom finishes; even with guidance
3. Average ability to follow through on assignments
4. Above average ability to complete assignments
5. Always completes assignments without supervision

Tackfulness
1. Always rude
2. Usually disregards other's feelings
3. Average tactfulness; occassionally socially inappropriate
4. Above-average tactfulness; rarely socially inappropriate
5. Always tactful; never socially inappropriate

V. Motor

General coordination; running, climbing, hopping, walking
1. Very poorly coordinated; clumsey
2. Below average coordination; awkward
3. Average coordination for age; outstanding but not graceful
4. Above average coordination; does well in these activities
5. Exceptional ability; excels in this area

Balance
1. Very poor balance
2. Below average; falls frequently
3. Average balance for age; but outstanding but adequate equilibrium
5. Exceptional ability; excells in balancing

Ability to manipulate utensils and equipment; manual dexterity
1. Very poor in manual manipulation
2. Awkward in manual dexterity
3. Adequate dexterity for age; manipulates well
4. Above average manual dexterity
5. Almost perfect performance; readily manipulates new equipment

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Student Screening Profile

Date of Birth_____

Name_____ Sex_____ Date_____

School _____ Grade or Level_____Teacher_____

I. Auditory comprehension and listening
A. Ability to follow directions
1 2 3 4 5 A._____

B. Comprehension of class discussion
1 2 3 4 5 B._____

C. Ability to retain information
1 2 3 4 5 C._____

D. Comprehension of word meanings
1 2 3 4 5 D._____ Total I._____

SELF EVALUATION OF LEARNING FUNCTIONS

Your Name_____ Your Teacher_____

YOUR AGE_____ BOY_____ GIRL_____

Directions

You are going to be asked some questions about yourself. You will be asked to rate yourself as you think your teacher would. Your teacher sees you at work in school and should know about the way you work. So, tell us how you think your teacher would rate you on these items. Look at the way you work, compare yourself to others who have this same teacher, then say if you think your teacher would say you are:

GREAT - hardly anyone does as well as you

PRETTY GOOD - better than most kids

OK - about like most kids

NOT GOOD - not as well as many kids

POOR - not as well as most kids

Let's try one. Put an X in the circle that tells how your teacher would rate you.

	GREAT	PRETTY GOOD	OK	NOT GOOD	POOR
When I am told to wash my hands, I can do it	○	○	○	○	○

If you have questions about what you are supposed to do, ask them now. Then go to the next page.

SELF EVALUATION OF LEARNING FUNCTIONS

	GREAT	PRETTY GOOD	OK	NOT GOOD	POOR
1. Whenever the class is told to do something, and how to do it, I listen and know what to do.	○	○	○	○	○
2. When our class talks about something, I join in and talk about what the class is talking about.	○	○	○	○	○
3. When the class is supposed to remember something, I can remember and tell about it later.	○	○	○	○	○
4. When the class is studying about something, I understand the meaning of the words and can use them correctly when called on.	○	○	○	○	○
5. I speak in correct sentences.	○	○	○	○	○
6. I know the meaning of lots of words, and use many words when I talk to others.	○	○	○	○	○
7. When talking, I use the right word so it is easy for others to understand.	○	○	○	○	○
8. I can come up with ideas and explain them to others.	○	○	○	○	○
9. When telling a story, I can tell it just the way it happened so everyone can understand.	○	○	○	○	○
10. When told to have something done at a certain time, I am ready and no one has to wait for me.	○	○	○	○	○
11. When going from one place to another place, I can go the shortest way without getting lost or mixed up.	○	○	○	○	○
12. When making comparisons - like - which one is big, which is far away, I can tell the right answer.	○	○	○	○	○
13. When I am told something is right or left of where I am, I know where to go.	○	○	○	○	○
14. When others want to do the same thing I want to do, I wait my turn.	○	○	○	○	○

		GREAT	PRETTY GOOD	OK	NOT GOOD	POOR
15.	When I am asked to pay attention to the things happening in class, I can do this.	○	○	○	○	○
16.	When I am supposed to arrange my work in a certain way and keep it neat, I can do it.	○	○	○	○	○
17.	When our class does something that everyone likes to do, I can wait and not jump around or become noisy.	○	○	○	○	○
18.	When students in my class choose people to play or work together, I am often chosen.	○	○	○	○	○
19.	When the teacher asks for someone to be in charge of something, I let the teacher know I want to do it.	○	○	○	○	○
20.	When I am given some work to do by myself, I can do it without help and turn it in when I am supposed to.	○	○	○	○	○
21.	When I am with others, I can say and do the right things so that no one gets hurt feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
22.	When we play, I can move well enough to play with others, and run, climb, and hop.	○	○	○	○	○
23.	When I stand on one leg, I can do this without falling over.	○	○	○	○	○
24.	When I do things with my hands, I can cut on the lines with a scissors, and put little pieces together without dropping any.	○	○	○	○	○